

THE LADY AND THE PIRATE

BY
EMERSON HOUGH

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(Continued.)

Jean Lafitte was all for opening up his own thumb for blood, but I stopped him. "This will do," said I, and I stained his fingers and those of L'Olonnois, who grew pale at the sight of it to his evident disgust.

So thus I became a pirate, and we three were brother rovers of the deep. I fancied my associates would be loyal. I was thinking of a certain cousin of the younger pirate. Not for worlds would I seek to pursue her now, but there had arisen in my soul already a sort of strange wonder whether some future of fate had sent this youngster here to remind me once more of her whom I would forget.

"Now," said I at last, "let us seek what fare the castle offers for the night."

If two buccanniers in my castle slept well that night a third did not. Anopheles might go hang. I did not fancy my new microscope. I doubted if my last violin were a real Strad. I did not like the last music my dealers had sent out to me. My studies of Confucius and Buddha might go hang, and my new book as well. For now before me came the face of a certain pirate's aunt, and she was indeed a lady fair. And I knew full well, as I had known all these years, although I had tried to deceive myself into believing otherwise, that, gladly as I had exchanged the city for the wilderness, with equal gladness would I exchange my island, all my wealth, all my belongings for a moment's touch of her hand, a half hour of talk heart to heart with her, so that, indeed, I might know the truth; so that, at least, I might have it direct from her, bitter though the truth might be.

In the morning I heard my pirate guests arguing over some matter, which proved to be no more serious than the question of a cold bath of morning. Jimmy maintaining that everybody had a cold bath every morning, whereas John insisted with equal heat that nobody ever bathed (twashed). I think he called it oftener than once a week—to wit, on Saturdays only. They engaged in a pillow fight to settle it, and as Jimmy had John fairly well smothered by his rapid fire I voted that the eyes appeared to have it when they referred the point to me. All went well until the keen eyes of Jimmy, wandering about my place, noted a certain photograph which rested on the top of my piano, where I was much comforted always to have it, especially of an evening. When some time I played Mendelssohn's "Spring Song" or other music of the like. It was the picture of the woman who did not know and very likely did not care where or how I lived—Helena Emory, to my mind one of the most beautiful women of her day, and I have seen the world's portraits of the world's beauties of all recorded days in beauty. Toward this Jimmy ran excitedly—I, with equal speed, endeavoring to divert him from his purpose.

"But it's my Auntie Helen!" he protested when I recovered it and placed it in my pocket.

"Is your auntie Helensides, Jimmy?" said I, smiling, holding my color was not heightened. "Is your grand mother? Plush your breakfast?"

"I guess I ought to know," he began.

"What?" I rejoined. "Would it pit your wisdom against one who has the second star? Have a care, helmsman!"

"It was," he reiterated. "I know there isn't anybody pretty as she is, so it was."

"But what'd he be doing with Miss Emory's picture, Jimmy?" argued Lafitte.

"That's what I'd like to know," I added. "It may be that in your haste you have confused in your mind, Jimmy, some portrait with that of the Princess Amelle Louise of Fumstemburg." Jimmy did not know that a photograph of the princess herself also stood upon the piano top, and he gazed somewhat confusedly at the portrait which I now produced before his eyes.

"Who was she?" he inquired.

"A very charming young lady of rank who eloped with a young man not of rank, in short, although she did not marry a chauffeur, she did marry an automobile agent. And surely, Jimmy, your Auntie Helen—however she may be—would do no such thing as that, and still claim to be a cousin of a L'Olonnois?"

"I don't know. You can't always tell what a girl's going to do," said Jimmy eagerly. "But I don't think Auntie Helen's going to marry an auto man."

"Why, Jimmy?" (I found pleasure and heart in this conversation.)

"Because everybody says she's going to get married to Mr. Davidson, and he's a commission man."

"Now I am sure my face did not flush. It may have paled. I tried to be composed. I reached for the melon dish and remarked: 'Yes? And who is he? And really, who is your Auntie Helen, Jimmy, and what does she look like?'"

"She looks like the princess, you said," replied Jimmy. "And Mr. Davidson's rich. He's got a house on our lake this summer, and he lives in New York."

and has offices in Chicago and travels a good deal. He has some sort of factory, too, and he's awful rich. I like him pretty well. He knows how to ball clubs stand, both leagues, every day in the year. You ought to know him, because then you might get to know my Auntie Helen. If they got married, like as not I could take you up to their house. I thought everybody knew Mr. Davidson and my Auntie Helen too."

CHAPTER III.

In Which We Sail For The Spanish Main.

EVERYBODY DID. Why should I not know Cal Davidson, one of the dearest chaps in the world? Why not since we belonged to half a dozen of the same clubs in New York and other cities? Why not since this very summer I had put my private yacht (named, oddly enough, the Belle Helene) in commission for the first season in three years and chartered her for the summer around Machinay and a cruise down the Mississippi to the Gulf that fall? Why not since I had still unbanked the handsome check Davidson had insisted on my taking as charter money for the last quarter?

Davidson? Of all men I had counted him my friend. And now here was he, reputed to be about to marry the girl who, as he knew, must have known ought to have known, was all the world to me. And my own yacht! Why, no man may know what may go forward in a yachting party. And if perchance that fall he could persuade to accompany him Helena and her chaperon (I made no doubt that would be her Aunt Lucinda, for Helena's mother died when she was a child), what could not so clever a man as Davidson, I repeat, one with so much of a way with women, accomplish in a journey so long as that, with no other man as his rival? It would be just like Cal Davidson to go ashore at St.



They Engaged in a Pillow Fight to Settle It.

Louis long enough to find a chaplain and then go on ahead for a honeymoon around the world—on my boat with my—no, she was not mine—but, then—Davidson must be found at once, must be halted in midcareer.

It was about this time that Hiroshimi came in with the morning's mail and telegrams, but I paid small attention to him.

Hiroshimi coughed. "Supposing honorable like to see these yellow wire envelops?"

I glanced down and idly opened the telegram. It was from Cal Davidson himself, and read:

Name best price outright sale Bill Helen to me, answer Chicago.

So then the second red actually was on his way down the lakes, headed for the south, even thus early in the season. I knew, of course, that Bill Helen meant Belle Helene. As though I would sell my boat to him, of all men. It might almost as well have been a sale of Helena herself outright, as this cursed telegram stated. I crumpled the sheet in my hand.

"If honorable contemplates some answering of mail this morning, it will be one worse than the miserable pony mail carry all man comes," ventured Hiroshimi.

"Nothing this morning, Hiro," I managed to chuckle out. "And, Hiro, make ready my bag, the small one, for a journey."

"S-s-s-s," hissed Hiroshimi, which was his way of saying, "Yes, sir, very well, sir."

I managed to better the wardrobe of both boys by certain ducks and tins from my own store, albeit a world too large. Lafitte, none too happy at being thus uncongenially clean, was delighted when set to selecting an armament from my collection. He

chose three bright and clean Japanese swords, special blades of the samurai armorers, forged long before Mutsu-hito's grandfather was a boy—I bid paid a rare price for them in Japan. To these he added three basket handled cutlasses, which I had obtained in London, each almost old enough to have belonged to the crew of Drake himself. A short barreled magazine pistol for each of us was his concession to the present unromantic age. As for Jimmy, he insisted on a small bore rifle as well as a shotgun. "We might see something," he remarked laconically.

Thus equipped, I persuaded my associates to lay aside most of their somewhat archaic artillery. Neither had taken any thought of other supplies. Hiroshimi, however, now appeared, bearing in addition to my hand luggage, two hampers, a roll of blankets and a silk tent in its canvas wrapper.

"Honorable is embarked in those small going boat that is made tied to the bank?" inquired Hiroshimi. I only nodded now, relying on his efficiency. He approached my young pirates, and rather against their will moved from some of their burden of weapons, slinging about himself bundles, baskets, bags and cutlery, until he almost disappeared from view. He cast on me a reproachful gaze, however, as he took from Lafitte's hand the barred blade of the old samurai sword and noted the ancient inscription on blade and scabbard as he sheathed it reverently.

"What does it say, Hiro?" I asked of him.

"Very old talk, honorable," answered Hiroshimi. "It say, 'Oh, honorable gentleman who carry me, I invite you to make high and noble adventures.'"

"Let me carry it, Hiro," said I, and I tucked it under my own arm.

"Good!" exclaimed L'Olonnois. "Then you are going with us? And did you write the letters that you promised us?"

"I always keep my word."

"And I'll be all right back home about mother and the boat? I'll give you my \$6."

"There is no need. I told you if you would make me one of the crew of the Sea Rover and let me seek my fortune with you—I would gladly pay all the reckoning of our journey."

"And how long will we be gone?"

"Till after your school begins, I fear."

"And how far are you going with us?"

"Spang to the Spanish main!" I answered.

So then we set forth down my woodland path.

We were greeted by no hostile shot and found our vessel quite as we had left her, as I could see at a glance when we neared the bank; but none the less, something stirred in the bushes.

A groan and a sudden barking greeted Hiroshimi as he approached the boat in advance.

"You, Tige," called out Lafitte. The dog, a dog none too beautiful and now just a bit forlorn, approached us, alternately wagging in friendship and retreating in alarm.

"Well, what do you think of that?" said Jimmy. "We left him back at the lake—sent him home half a dozen times. How'd he be get here and how'd he know where we was?"

"He couldn't 'a' swum the lake," assented John, "and it was more'n ten miles around, and how could he smell where we went on the water? Come here, Tige, you blame fool!"

"Now," said I, "he is no fool, this dog, but a creature of great reason, else he never could have found you. And I'll be bound he is as keen for adventure as any of us."

"He is coming here last night two o'clock after dinner," said the omniscient Hiroshimi. "Also he bite me out leg. He also is malefactor."

"He has allotted to himself the duty of caring for the property of his masters, Hiro," I said, "and hence is not really a malefactor. Besides, since he would not leave the boat and follow our trail he is by this time hungry. Feed him, Hiro."

But Hiroshimi was not eager to approach the piratical canine again, so I myself fished something from a hamper and called the dog to me. He ate gladly and most gratefully.

Now it is a strange thing to say, but it is the truth. I had never before in my life fed a dog. I had won many knotty suits at law, had solved many hard problems dealing with human nature and had found human nature for the most part rarely glad or grateful, but I had never owned or even fed a dog. A strange new feeling came in me. Suddenly I scowled some invisible, intangible thing.

"John," said I, "what breed of dog is this? Indeed, it was hard to tell off-hand, although he had the keen head of a collie."

"I guess he's just one o' them partial dogs," answered John—"mostly shepherd, maybe, I judge."

"Very well. Partial shall be his name. And is he young?"

"He runs round on the farm. He goes with Jimmy and me."

"John, will you sell me Part?" I asked this suddenly, realizing that my voice might sound odd.

"What'd you want him fer?" he replied. "He'd be a nuisance."

"I think not. See how faithful he has been; see how grateful he is, and how wise. He reasoned where you were as well as I reasoned where you were. He knows now that we are talking about him and knows that I am his friend—see him look at me; see him come over and stand by me. John, do you think you believe a dog, this dog, would learn to like me, ever? Would he understand me?"

"Well," said John judiciously, standing sword in hand, "I dunno. Some ways, maybe dogs and boys understand quicker. But you understand us. You understand us."

"Well reasoned, John," said I. "Perhaps your logic is better than you know—at least I hope so."

"Honorable is embarking those malefactor canine thing with so much tin pediments in this small going boat?" inquired Hiroshimi.

(To Be Continued.)

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PROF. TAFT OPENS UNITARIAN MEET

San Francisco, Aug. 25.—Devotional services and an address by William Howard Taft, its president, opened the business sessions here to-day of the twenty-sixth biennial general conference of Unitarian and other Christian churches. The conference will close Friday night.

Ive Samuel Elliott, D. D., of Boston, president of the American Unitarian Association, formally opened the conference last night. On the subject of the ministry, he said:

"The ministry is no place for those who fear incurring risks, or for those who seek ease and physical comfort, but for those who love adventure and who are eager to follow truth wherever it leads."

LITTLE BENNY'S NOTEBOOK

By Lee Page

Ma was reading a book in the setting room last night and pop was sitting there smoking, and awl of a sudden he sed very loud, Mofhir, look, well of awl things, yure feat are axually attached to yure body.

And Ma quick dropped the book into her lap and looked down at her feat, saying, Wat, wat, O, you simplit thing, are you perfectly crazy?

Ha ha ha, not at awl, sed pop, I was sed demonstrating a scientific articlel I sed the other day, argewing that its the tone of voice rather than the axull words wich causes the effect on the lissener, and now I no its troo. I meerly informed you that yure feat were attached to yure body and you awlmost jumped a mile, ha ha ha.

Very brillint, Im sure, scaring me half out of my sense with yure crazy talk, sed Ma.

Yure feat are attached to yure body, ha ha, sed pop. And he kepp awn hmoaking and startid to leen back in his chare as if he was thinking of sumthing importint and Ma looked at him a wile and then she yeld ma quick awl of a sudden, Wiliyym, Wiliyym, you've got eers awn the sides of yure face.

Wats that, wats that, sed pop. And he dropped his segar out of his mouth and put both hands up to his cheeks, and then he quick tried to get his segar agen and burned his fingrs awn the lighted part, saying, confound it, jimmity blast it.

Hee, hee, thats the time you tumbled into yure own trap, sed Ma. Very tury, sed pop. Meeting it wasent. And he bloo awn his fingrs and leened back in his chare agen and in about 10 minits Ma looked at him and he was looking up at the ceiling thinking and smooking, and Ma yeld out, O, goodniss grayhiss, Wiliyym yure mouth is rife undr yure nose. Sumthing as if she was saying the House was on fire or sumthing, and pop segar dropped out of his mouth agen and he quick mad and grabbed it and put the lighted end in his mouth, and bjoo it, put agen even quicker than wat he had put it in, saying, Goshangh the histery blastid business, it awl to smother me, awl, awl, after a joak ceases to be a joak, it has ceased to be a joak, thats awl.

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